

DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET INFORMATION BUILDINGS & SAFETY ENGINEERING (13)

MISSION

The mission of the Buildings and Safety Engineering Department is to provide for the safety, health and welfare of the general public as it pertains to buildings and their environs in an economic and user - friendly manner.

DESCRIPTION

The Buildings and Safety Engineering Department administers zoning and construction codes which control the erection, alteration, use and maintenance of new and existing buildings and structures. The Department issues permits and monitors construction and use through inspection services. The maintenance of conditions in existing buildings and their environs are regulated by Ordinances that require periodic inspections.

CORE SERVICES

Increased building code enforcement is a major service component of neighborhood stabilization and improvement. This supports housing and home ownership and reduction in abandoned buildings throughout the city, supporting residential and commercial properties.

MAJOR INITIATIVES

During 1999/2000, the **Buildings Division** began enforcement of Ordinance 17-98, pertaining to enforcement of the dangerous buildings code for barricaded structures. This activity will be increased during 2001/02, holding hearings for owners of barricaded structures and requiring rehabilitation plans for occupancy within six months. Demolition of structures which are open to trespass will continue, although this activity is expected to decrease as property

values continue to rise. Also, during the previous fiscal year, the Buildings Division instituted tighter reviews of request for demolition deferrals, through revised office hearings procedures and revised rescission applications. This enforcement will continue into the next fiscal year, which is expected to further reduce the number of abandoned buildings. The annual inspection process for commercial buildings is being revised to include an emphasis on property maintenance and zoning conditions and additional staff has been requested to increase the volume of buildings inspected annually.

During the previous fiscal year, the **Plumbing Division** analyzed the need for annual cross-Connection control inspections to identify those with highest priority (hospitals, funeral homes, etc.) in order to match them with available resources. Increased recruiting efforts continue to identify additional staff for the **Electrical Division** in order to respond to increased inspection demand. Due to the "Single State Construction Code Act", the City now enforces the 1999 Michigan Electrical Code, and license examination procedures will be reduced in accordance with the new code. All Divisions are being trained on the impact of the "Single State Construction Code Act" and training is planned for the pending International Construction Codes, which the State will require the City to adopt after June 2001.

Establishment of the **Zoning Enforcement Unit** in accordance with the new code was finalized during the 2000/01 fiscal year. Implementation of the Municipal Civil

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Infraction Ordinance procedures were piloted and will be available for zoning enforcement, primarily commercial properties, and the audit of the conditions of all special land use grants.

A comprehensive analysis of the **Nuisance Abatement** programs were completed last year. All NA contractors who were in default (because they exceeded the three year limit for rehabilitation or failed to occupy the dwelling) were contacted to present a plan to complete their obligations, or the contracts were terminated. For 2001-02, enforcement will continue to ensure that all open contracts remain in compliance and that the properties related to terminated contracts are disposed of effectively.

Last year B&SED and P&DD reviewed all available City-owned properties to determine which ones were eligible for the Nuisance Abatement **Repair to Own** program. These properties were offered and contracted during the year. Because Repair to Own contracts cannot exceed twelve months, frequent inspections and strong enforcement are required. However, due to the lack of new contracts issued for the Repair to Own program funded in the general fund, B&SED in 2001-02 will move the operation and staff to the Housing/Inspection Division.

Implementation of Tidemark software is underway. Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing permits were automated as well as Inspection scheduling and tracking, presale and rental housing inspections, and zoning enforcement. Implementation of Tidemark software will continue during 2001/02 fiscal year with automation of the Buildings

permits and use licenses. Other agencies, such as Consumers Affairs and City Engineering will also be implementing Tidemark applications to integrate with the B&SED operations. Once the core processes (permitting and inspections) are operational, internet permit requests interactive voice response can be added and employed for inspection services. During 2001/02 handheld devices will be added for inspection services.

In the **Housing Division** recent changes to the pre-sale housing ordinance resulted in doubling the volume of presale inspection requests during 2000-01. A revision of the inspection guidelines for pre-sale, rental during 2001/02 and other residential inspections is underway with implementation planned for the 2001/02 fiscal year. The presale inspection will be reused to provide a more concise, safety oriented and customer friendly inspection. During 2001/02 the department intends to reenact the International Property Maintenance Code for rental inspections and other residential code enforcement. Neighborhood stabilization efforts will be supported primarily by two initiatives: 1) city-wide property neighborhoods and 2) increased diligence and enforcement of rental properties. The Housing Division is prioritizing enforcement activities for rental properties with multiple units or landlords holding more than 10 properties. Inspection checklists and stricter enforcement procedures are being developed. Also B&SED is working with the State of Michigan to take measures against sheltered vendor rent landlords who are not in compliance.

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Court activity staff are being reorganized to accommodate the additional court activity anticipated from increased code enforcement. Also, procedures have been modified to provide for show cause hearings prior to filing of court cases, to reduce the strain on the limited court docket available. During 2001/02, the Housing Division will be divided into districts that correspond with the Community Reinvestment Strategy and Neighborhood City Hall districts, with the intent of providing closer communications and accountability between the community and the Division.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Continue building code enforcement is a major service component of neighborhood stabilization. Lack of staff in the past resulted in passive enforcement (based on complaints only) and as a result many properties face serious challenges to become code-compliant. Effective code enforcement programs will take several years to bring about a community mindset that code compliance is not a choice and also allow property owners the financial resources and time that will be required for necessary upgrades. The code enforcement programs planned for this fiscal year must be followed with increasing stringent programs in following years.

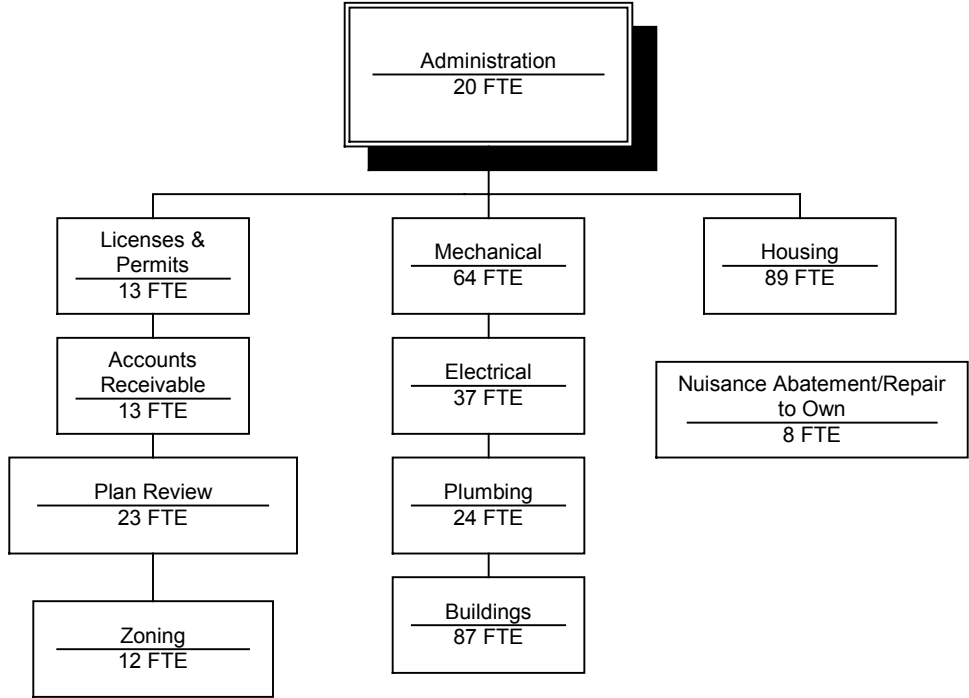
Competition for labor, especially skilled trades, is severely impacting the ability to recruit and retain both inspection and electrical staff. Simultaneously, permit volumes continue to rise and customer demand for faster service increases. The

City's ability to meet these challenges relies on certain strategies. Complete automation and integration of permit and inspection services is required to maximize staff productivity and reduce clerical staffing needs.

Complete implementation of the Tidemark software is critical to this effort. Secondly, decentralization of inspection offices will improve productivity by eliminating the need for inspectors to come downtown and park. (The initial pilot project showed a 20% increase in inspections.) B&SED is considering different plans which may allow for this, but making records available electronically at off-site locations will first be required. In the long-term, a location outside of the downtown area, with adequate free parking would better serve both customers and staff. Lastly, B&SED is evaluating alternative methods for adjudicating code enforcement cases, which is required due to limited available staff and court time and planned increases in code enforcement activities.

Recent analyses completed for the Nuisance Abatement and Repair to Own programs indicate that both lack the effectiveness that was originally anticipated. A collaborative effort between B&SED, P&DD and City Planning Commission is planned to review both programs to determine what changes are required to make them effective, from both a cost and a neighborhood stabilization standpoint.

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PERFORMANCE GOALS, MEASURES AND TARGETS

Goals: Measures	1999-00 Actual	2000-01 Projection	2001-02 Target
Enforce codes within the framework of nationally Recognized codes established by Ordinance:			
Number of pre-sale housing inspections	9,115	12,000	10,000
Building permits issued	6,028	6,928	7,000
Total permits issued	32,234	33,000	34,000
Maintain the stability and safety of neighborhoods:			
Number of barricaded structures	5,593	4,500	3,500
Number of nuisance abatement contracts completed	264	315	365
Maintain the safety and peace			
Number of weeks for special land use decisions	4	4	4
Zoning Reviews	185	180	200
Satisfy business, residential and other customers:			
Number of vacant structure complaints	5,100	3,600	2,400
Operate the department self-sufficiently:			
Percent of fees collected	70%	75%	90%
Build and maintain a high-performance organization:			
Number of employee participation teams	7	6	6

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EXPENDITURES

	1999-00 Actual Expense	2000-01 Redbook	2001-02 Mayor's Budget Rec	Variance	Variance Percent
Salary & Wages	\$ 11,610,717	\$ 14,115,937	\$ 14,797,078	\$ 681,141	5%
Employee Benefits	5,906,714	7,242,435	7,446,177	203,742	3%
Prof/Contractual	848,903	1,399,000	1,032,000	(367,000)	-26%
Operating Supplies	146,749	99,550	110,637	11,087	11%
Operating Services	1,600,697	1,641,440	1,770,151	128,711	8%
Capital Equipment	463,447	-	-	-	0%
Capital Outlays	5,324	-	-	-	0%
Other Expenses	68,467	184,000	134,000	(50,000)	-27%
TOTAL	\$ 20,651,018	\$ 24,682,362	\$ 25,290,042	\$ 607,680	2%
POSITIONS	307	392	390	(2)	0%

REVENUES

	1999-00 Actual Revenue	2000-01 Redbook	2001-02 Mayor's Budget Rec	Variance	Variance Percent
Licenses/Permits	\$ 19,413,355	\$ 17,190,000	\$ 19,870,000	\$ 2,680,000	16%
Fines/Forfeits/Pen	-	100,000	100,000	-	0%
Rev from Use of Assets	199,595	-	-	-	0%
Grants/Shared Taxes	555,682	790,000	600,000	(190,000)	-24%
Sales & Charges	1,098,016	2,380,000	1,580,000	(800,000)	-34%
Miscellaneous	115	10,000	-	(10,000)	-100%
TOTAL	\$ 21,266,763	\$ 20,470,000	\$ 22,150,000	\$ 1,680,000	8%